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### **Environment Department Works to Clean-Up Petroleum Pollution in Milan**

(Santa Fe, NM) — Through the work of the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), an extensive, \$2.5 million ground water investigation and clean up is underway to combat pollution from several leaking underground storage tanks located at a facility in Milan, NM.

"It might not be one of the best known things that we do, but cleaning up spills from petroleum storage tanks is one of the most important," said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. "By restoring ground water NMED protects the health of New Mexicans and ensures that we will have enough of this finite resource to go around."

Gasoline contamination was discovered at the Milan site, located at 1430 Febco, in June 1998 when gasoline was pumped from a nearby irrigation well.

Once the contamination was discovered, the investigation into the source focused on the former fueling facility located across the street and to the east. A drilling services company had operated underground storage tanks on the property until the late 1980s when the current owner, Mr. Marvin Burrows, acquired the property. According to Mr. Burrows, he never used the tanks and removed them from the ground soon after acquiring the property. However, as the most recent owner of the tanks, Mr. Burrows voluntarily agreed to hire an environmental consultant to conduct an initial sub-surface soil and ground water investigation.

The contamination is believed to cover an area in excess of 3 and one-half acres and extends to depths in excess of 120 feet below ground surface. Depth to the regional aquifer in this area is about 160 feet below the ground surface. The ground water is contaminated with chemicals, including benzene, which are commonly found in leaded gasoline. In addition, there is gasoline contaminated soil, as well as liquid gasoline in the subsurface.

Gasoline accumulations of as much as 47 feet in thickness have been observed in the irrigation well. Gasoline accumulations of lesser amounts have also been observed in 17 of the 48 monitoring and remediation wells installed as part of this project. The liquid gasoline constitutes the significant portion of the contamination with preliminary estimates indicating a volume in the tens of thousands of gallons.

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“Ground water is a vital resource, especially in rural New Mexico where it is drawn upon for drinking water, agricultural irrigation and industry,” said Secretary Curry. “Through these remediation projects NMED works with rural communities to restore this water for beneficial use.”

To restore the contaminated ground water a remediation system has been installed. It includes 37 recovery wells and two separate surface equipment compounds. The system uses a combination of high-vacuum blowers, down-hole pumps, conveyance piping, valve manifolds, and control equipment to remove liquid gasoline, gasoline vapors, and gasoline-contaminated ground water from the sub-surface. The waste-stream will then be processed and treated using state-of-the-art equipment. System start-up is currently underway.

Costs for the investigation and clean up have been paid for from the Corrective Action Fund (CAF). The CAF was created in 1990 as part of the Ground Water Protection Act. It is funded through the collection of a petroleum products loading fee that is charged to the fuel distributor each time a tanker truck is loaded with fuel. To date, more than \$2.5 million dollars has been approved for work at this site.

The Department wishes to commend the local officials of the Village of Milan and City of Grants, as well as the affected property owners, for their high level of cooperation with NMED over the course of this effort.

For additional information, contact Joyce Shearer, Remedial Action Program Manager, Petroleum Storage Tank Bureau, NMED at (505) 984-1935 or Jon Goldstein, Communications Dir., NMED, at (505) 827-0314.

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